

In the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 3, 4-13, 25-27, 30, 32, and 92-100 to read as indicated below. In addition, please cancel claims 66 and 94, and add claims 101-105. A complete set of the claims as pending after entrance of the present Amendment is presented in Appendix B.

03
1. (Amended) An antibody directed to a conformational epitope of a protein of Hepatitis C virus E2 protein of more than one genotype.

3. (Deleted) An antibody directed to a conformational epitope of E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus.

5. (Amended) The antibody of claim 1 wherein the dissociation constant (K_D) of the antibody for its epitope is less than 10^{-8} M.

04
6. (Amended) The antibody of claim 1 wherein the dissociation constant (K_D) of the antibody for its epitope is less than 10^{-9} M.

7. (Amended) The antibody of claim 1 wherein the dissociation constant (K_D) of the antibody for its epitope is less than 10^{-10} M.

8. (Amended) An antibody directed to a conformational epitope within amino acids 411 through 644 of E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus 1b, wherein the antibody is capable of binding to the E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus of more than one genotype.

9. (Amended) An antibody directed to a conformational epitope within amino acids 470 through 644 of E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus 1b, wherein the antibody is capable of binding to the E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus of more than one genotype.

10. (Amended) An antibody directed to a conformational epitope within amino acids 470 through 644 of E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus 1b and exhibits minimal cross-competition with the antibodies of claim 8, wherein the antibody binds specifically to the E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus of more than one genotype.

11. (Amended) An antibody directed to an epitope within amino acids 644 through 661 of E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus 1b, wherein the antibody is capable of binding to the E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus of more than one genotype.

12. (Amended) An antibody directed to the epitope recognized by CBH-2, -4D, -4B, -4G, -5, -7, -8C or -11.

13. (Amended) An antibody wherein the antibody competes with CBH-2, -4D, -4B, -4G, -5, -7, -8C, or -11 for binding to its epitope.

25. (Amended) The antibody of claim 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13 wherein the antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

26. (Amended) The antibody of claim 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13 wherein the antibody is a human antibody.

27. (Amended) The antibody of claim 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13 wherein the antibody is a humanized antibody.

30. (Amended) A method of treating or preventing HCV infection in a patient, the method comprising steps of:

providing a patient infected with HCV or susceptible to HCV infection; and
administering to the patient the antibody of claim 1.

32. (Amended) The method of claim 30 or 31 wherein the step of administering the antibody comprises administering more than one different antibody, wherein at least one of the antibodies is directed to a conformational epitope of a protein of Hepatitis C virus.

70. (Amended) The method of claim 67, wherein the step of administering comprises administering an antibody directed to the epitope that is bound by an anti-HCV monoclonal antibody, the binding of which is not inhibited by the patient's serum.

Sub. E²
C9
92. (Amended) A combination of two or more antibodies directed to two or more different conformational epitopes of E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus of more than one genotype.

93. (Amended) The combination of claim 92, wherein the combination shows increased total binding of the combined antibodies to E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus compared to either antibody individually.

95. (Amended) The combination of claim 92 comprising CBH-7 and CBH-4G.

Sub E²
96. (Amended) The combination of claim 92 comprising CBH-7 and CBH-4D.

C10
97. (Amended) The combination of claim 92 comprising CBH-7 and CBH-17.

98. (Amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising the combination of claim 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, or 97 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

99. (Amended) A method of treating or preventing HCV infection in a patient, the method comprising steps of:

providing a patient infected with HCV or susceptible to HCV infection; and
administering to the patient the combination of claim 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, or 97.

100. A method of treating a patient that has been exposed to HCV, the method comprising steps of:

providing a patient that has been exposed to HCV; and
administering to the patient the antibody of claim 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, or 97.

Please add the following new claims.

101. (New) A combination of two or more antibodies, wherein at least one antibody is directed to a conformational epitope of E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus of more than one genotype.

102. (New) The combination of claim 101, wherein the combination shows increased binding to the epitopes of E2 protein of Hepatitis C virus than either antibody individually.

103. (New) The combination of claim 92 comprising CBH-7 and CBH-5.

104. (New) The combination of claim 92 comprising CBH-7 and CBH-2.

105. (New) The combination of claim 93, wherein each antibody in the combination is directed to a different epitope.

Remarks

Claims 1, 2-23, 25-32, 66, 67, 70, and 92-100 were examined in this case. All claims were rejected in the Office Action. The present Response amends claims 1, 3, 5-13, 25-27, 30, 32, and 92-93, and 95-100, cancels claims 66 and 94, and adds claims 101-105. Each of the objections and rejections levied in the Office Action is addressed individually below.